WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A master device for multimedia information which is connected to at least one slave device for multimedia information via a network comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the master device;

means for collecting a directory list of the slave device by at least one of retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device and receiving the directory list generated by the slave device;

means for generating an integrated directory list by integrating the self directory list of the master device and the directory list collected from the slave device; and

means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list.

2.   A master device for multimedia information according to claim 1 further comprising:

means for distributing the integrated directory list to the slave device via the network.

3.   A slave device for multimedia information connected via a network to the master device for multimedia information according to claim 1, the slave device comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device; and

means for distributing the self directory list to the master device via the network.

4.   A slave device for multimedia information connected via a network to the master device for multimedia information according to claim 2, the slave device comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device; and

means for distributing the self directory list to the master device via the network.

5.   A slave device for multimedia information according to claim 4 further comprising:

means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list which is distributed via the network by the master device for multimedia information.

6.   A device for multimedia information according to any one of claims 1, 2 and 5, wherein conditions established for retrieving the integrated directory list are defined by data which is entered via an input slot displayed on the means for retrieving and displaying.

7.   A device for multimedia information according to any one of claims 1, 2 and 5, wherein conditions established for retrieving the integrated directory list are defined by data which is memorized beforehand in a memory of the means for retrieving and displaying.

8.   A computer program for managing files of a master device for multimedia information which is connected via a network to at least one slave

device for multimedia information, the computer program executing a processor of the master device so as to provide functions to the means comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving the files stored in a memory of the master device;

means for collecting a directory list of the slave device by at least one of retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device and receiving the directory list generated by the slave device;

means for generating an integrated directory list by integrating the self directory list of the master device and the directory list collected from the slave device; and

means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list.

9. A computer program according to claim 7 further executing the processor so as to provide a function to the means for distributing the integrated directory list to the slave device via the network.

10. A computer program for managing files of a slave device for multimedia information connected via a network to the master device for multimedia information according to claim 1, the computer program executing a processor of the slave device so as to provide functions to the means comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device; and

means for distributing the self directory list to the master device via the network.

11.   A computer program for managing files of a slave device for multimedia information connected via a network to the master device for multimedia information according to claim 2, the computer program executing a processor of the slave device so as to provide functions to the means comprising:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device; and

means for distributing the self directory list to the master device via the network.

12.   A computer program according to claim 11 further executing the processor so as to provide a function to means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list which is distributed via the network by the master device for multimedia information.

13.   A computer program for managing files of a device for multimedia information according to any one of claims 8, 9 and 12, wherein conditions established for retrieving the integrated directory list are defined by data which is entered via an input slot displayed on the means for retrieving and displaying.

14.   A computer program for managing files of a device for multimedia information according to any one of claims 8, 9 and 12, wherein conditions established for retrieving the integrated directory list are defined by data which is memorized beforehand in a memory of the means for retrieving and displaying.

15. A network system in which one or a plurality of slave devices and one master device for multimedia information are connected by a network,

wherein the master device comprises:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the master device;

means for collecting a directory list of the slave device by at least one of retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device and receiving the directory list generated by the slave device;

means for generating an integrated directory list by integrating the self directory list of the master device and the directory list collected from the slave device;

means for distributing the integrated directory list to the slave device via the network; and

means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list,

wherein the slave device comprises:

means for generating a self directory list by retrieving files stored in a memory of the slave device;

means for distributing the self directory list to the master device via the network; and

means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list which is distributed via the network by the master device for multimedia information,

wherein at least one of the slave devices and the master device each possess the integrated directory list in a synchronized form.

16.   A method for managing a file in the network system according to claim 15, comprising the steps of:

when a change occurs in the directory list of the master device, updating the integrated directory list based on the change;

when a change occurs in the directory list of one slave device, notifying the master device of the change, collecting the directory list of the slave device and updating the integrated directory list based on the collected directory list; and

distributing the updated integrated directory list to at least one of the slave devices.

17.   A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

when a new device for multimedia information is connected to the network system, notifying the master device of new connection;

collecting a directory list of the new device based on notification provided by the new device, and comparing scores of master adaptability written on directory lists of the master device and the new device;

when a score of the new device is higher than a score of the master device, notifying the new device of replacement of a master, distributing the integrated directory list which the master device possesses to the new device, and starting the new device acting as a master device; and

when the score of the new device is not higher than the score of the master device, starting the new device acting as a slave device.

18.   A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

when the master device withdraws from the network, extracting a

device which has a highest score of master adaptability second to the master device, notifying the extracted device of replacement of a master, and distributing an updated integrated directory list, from which the directory list of the master device is removed, to the extracted device; and

starting the device, which has received the updated integrated directory list, acting as a master device.

19.   A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

selecting a file to be used with a cursor out of names of files displayed by the means for retrieving and displaying the integrated directory list;

retrieving the integrated directory list and checking if there is a file equivalent to the selected file;

when there is the equivalent file, comparing data transmission speeds of devices for multimedia information which store files; and

when a data transmission speed of a device which stores the equivalent file is higher than a data transmission speed of a device which stores the selected file, replacing the selected file with the equivalent file.

20.   A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

after the master device distributes the integrated directory list to the slave device, retracting a file newly registered, a file newly used and a file which has been used not less than certain number of times while retrieving the integrated directory list;

when the extracted file resides in a device for multimedia information having a lower data transmission speed and a device for multimedia information having a higher data transmission speed keeps a vacancy not less

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than a certain memory capacity, transferring the extracted file residing in the device having the lower data transmission speed to the device having the higher data transmission speed.

5   21.   A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

after the master device distributes the integrated directory list to the slave device, extracting a file which resides in a mobile device for multimedia information and which has not been evacuated to a fixed device for multimedia information driven by an AC power supply while retrieving the integrated

10   directory list; and

transferring the extracted file to the fixed device.